

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02 AID-05  
MCT-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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P R 161000Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4585  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PDEV LE PLO  
SUBJ: PALESTINIAN POLITICAL INITIATIVE ON SOUTH LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: PALESTINIAN EFFORT TO ARRANGE MODUS VIVENDI IN SOUTH LEBANON, WHICH BEGAN SOME TEN DAYS AGO, SEEMS TO BE GAINING MOMENTUM WITH CALLS ON GOL OFFICIALS AND CHRISTIAN LEBANESE FRONT LEADERS BY PLO EMISSARIES HANI HASSAN, BASSIM AKL, AND SALAH KHALAF (ABU IYAD). IDEAS BEING DISCUSSED INCLUDE A CEASE-FIRE, JOINT COMMITTEES, AND WITHDRAWALS IN CERTAIN AREAS. CAMILLE CHAMOUN IS PLAYING ROLE OF INTRANSIGENT CHAMPION OF LEBANESE INTERESTS, BUT IS ALLOWING HIS SUBORDINATES TO TALK TO THE PLO. SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT APPEARS TO BE MINIMAL.  
END SUMMARY.

2. PLO EMISSARY HANI HASSAN KICKED OFF PALESTINIAN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH NEW ENTENTE WITH GOL AND WITH KFUR  
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FRONT DURING EARLY DAYS OF JULY. INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE WEEKLY AL JUMHOUR JULY 7 REPORTED PLO HAS ADOPTED NEW STRATEGY OF SEEKING TO DEVELOP BRIDGES TO THE MARONITE LEADERSHIP WITH THE AIM OF SETTLING ALL OUTSTANDING DISPUTES. HASSAN TOLD MARONITE PATRIARACH KHORAICHE THAT PLO WAS READY TO FULLY IMPLEMENT DECISIONS OF OCTOBER 1976 RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS.

3. HE MET CHAMOUN DEPUTY KHAZIM KHALIL JULY 9 AND BRIEFLY ALSO CHAMOUN HIMSELF, ALTHOUGH THIS MEETING HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICIZED. ACCORDING TO KHALIL, CHAMOUN ASKED, "ARE YOU GOING TO FIGHT ISRAEL?;" HASSAN SAID NO; CHAMOUN SAID, "THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT?" THEY AGREED TO MEET AGAIN.

4. HASSAN MET PRESIDENT SARKIS, PRIMIN HOSS, AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE KAMAL ASSAD JULY 11 AND SAID HE WOULD MEET AS WELL WITH THE NEWLY-ORGANIZED "NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF SOUTH LEBANON." HE TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH LEBANON WOULD BE A (CHRISTIAN) LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN INITIATIVE, BACKED UP BY THE GOL AND SARG.

5. ON JULY 13, HASSAN MET WITH NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY LEADERS MOUSSA PRINCE AND CHARLES GHOSTINE. ON THE SAME DAY, PLO UN DELEGATE BASSIM AKL MET WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS, AND FATAH "POLITICAL SECURITY" CHIEF SALAH KHALAF (ABU IYAD) MET WITH PRIMIN HOSS AND SAEB SALAM.

6. PROPOSALS. VARIOUS PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE PRINCIPAL PALESTINIAN PROPOSALS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. A CEASE-FIRE (PRESUMABLY IN PRESENT LOCATIONS) IN SOUTH LEBANON;  
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B. MUTUAL WITHDRAWALS FROM CERTAIN AREAS TO ESTABLISH DEMILITARIZED ZONE; ACCORDING AMERICAN JOURNALIST, PROPOSAL IS FOR 5-6 KM WITHDRAWAL;

C. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN MILITARY COMMITTEE TO SUPERVISE THE CEASE-FIRE AND WITHDRAWALS;

D. DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS IN SOUTH LEBANON.

7. THE MOST SPECIFIC COUNTERPROPOSALS WHICH HAVE EMERGED SO FAR HAVE COME FROM NLP LEADERS PRINCE AND GHOSTINE WHO, ACCORDING TO LE REVEIL JULY 14, PROPOSE:

A. A CEASEFIRE;

B. WITHDRAWAL OF ALL COMBATANTS SOME TEN TO FIFTEEN KILOMETERS FROM THE ISRAELI BORDER;

C. DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO THE AREA; AND

D. "EXECUTION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD."

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8. POLITICAL THEATER. WHILE HIS AGENTS ARE DISCUSSING NUTS AND BOLTS, CAMILLE CHAMOUN IS TAKING A HARD LINE PUBLICLY. ON JULY 12 HE DESCRIBED HANI HASSAN'S PROPOSALS AS "NONSENSE" AND SAID THEY WERE FORMULATED IN A VAGUE AND ELASTIC STYLE "WHICH LEADS NOWHERE." HE SAID THERE WAS NO POINT IN WASTING TIME SEEKING UNDERSTANDINGS WITH ANYONE "AS LONG AS THE PALESTINIANS HAVE NOT RETURNED TO THE POSITIONS WHICH THEY OCCUPIED BEFORE APRIL 13, 1975." HE DEMANDED THAT THE PALESTINIANS CEASE OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH AND EVACUATE DAMOUR, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "SACRED TERRITORY...WHICH IS NOT PART OF PALESTINIANS? THEY SHOULD RETURN TO THEIR CAMPS. THEY SHOULD RESPECT THE RULES OF HOSPITALITY. THEY SHOULD NOT INVOLVE THEMSELVES FURTHER IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THEY SHOULD RESPECT THE AGREEMENTS REACHED BETWEEN THEMSELVES, LEBANON, AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES."

9. PIERRE GEMAYEL TOOK A SIMILAR POSITION SAME DAY,  
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OBJECTING THAT THE PALESTINIAN PROPOSALS PLACED THE LEBANESE IN THE SOUTH AND THE PALESTINIANS ON AN EQUAL FOOTING. "YOU CANNOT DEMAND THAT THE INHABITANTS OF NABATIYAH WITHDRAW FROM THEIR OWN VILLAGE IN RETURN FOR A PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL." HE SAID CERTAIN ARAB STATES DIDN'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HOST AND HIS GUEST. SULEIMAN FRANJIEH, WE UNDERSTAND FROM KAZIM KHALIL, IS STILL REFUSING TO TALK TO THE PALESTINIANS.

10. COMMENT: WE WOULD RATE THE CHANCES OF SOMETHING USEFUL COMING OUT OF THE PALESTINIAN INITIATIVE AT ABOUT 50-50. THE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE QUITE SERIOUS, AND THEY HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT ON THE GROUND IN SOUTH LEBANON IN RECENT WEEKS, EVEN IN THE FACE OF THE RECENT CHRISTIAN ATTACK ON YARIN. THEY PROBABLY JUDGE THAT, NOW THAT IT HAS EMERGED CLEARLY THAT THE ARAB WORLD IS NOT GOING TO IMPOSE A RIGOROUS APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD, THEY ARE IN A FAVORABLE POSITION TO BARGAIN. ON THE CHRISTIAN SIDE, DESPITE THE CONTINUED EXPANSIONARY DREAMS OF THE MILITIA LEADERS, INCLUDING BECHIR GEMAYEL, IT MAY BE DAWNING ON THE SENIOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP THAT A MODUS VIVENDI IN THE SOUTH IS THE BEST THAT CAN BE REALISTICALLY ATTAINED AT THIS TIME. IT IS ANOTHER QUESTION, HOWEVER, WHETHER OR NOT THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CAN CONTROL THE MILITIA LEADERS, AND WHETHER OR NOT THE MILITIA LEADERS (IN BEIRUT) CAN CONTROL THE CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS IN THE SOUTH, GIVEN THEIR HIGH DEGREE OF DEPENDENCE ON THE ISRAELIS.

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